

Eckhart Tolle on The Spirituality Of St Francis Assisi- The Experience Of Lucid Living - A Meditation With Eckhart Tolle-

[Speaker 1] (0:48 - 23:35)

Welcome. I'm on my little summer retreat. It's quite hot and I'm glad we were able to make it.

Join us. Despite the fact that I believe right now there's a very important event happening on the planet which involves 24 men chasing one ball. So, if you're here despite that, I'm very happy.

And if you are tuning in from Brazil and you've been experiencing some unhappiness also connected with these 24 men, or perhaps a different set of 24 men, then you may want to look more deeply into the cause of that. And if it hadn't been Brazil it would be some other country. The mechanism is the same.

It all goes back to not realizing who you are and identifying with something else. Using an image in the mind, personal or collective, and endowing that personal or collective image with a sense of self. And if that happens, if something happens to that mentally created image, personally or collectively, you feel injured, hurt, or diminished in your sense of self.

And you become unhappy. So, that's a very normal thing. Most humans, except for those who already are in touch with that dimension within that lies beyond this superficial realm of delusion, most humans then have a number of things that they derive their sense of self from.

Partly collective, partly personal. Collective could mean your nation, your tribal identity, which relates to sport teams, and so on. Religion.

My religion, our religion. Or a particular church, or movement within one religion as opposed to another church that's different. Nationalism in some places is still strong, not as insane as it perhaps as it was in the 20th century in many places.

And many other collective identification from my club, my town, my this, my that, or our. And then personal possessions, status, recognition from others, or lack of it. Knowledge, personal appearance, external appearance, and so on.

All things the mind identifies with. Very precarious, because basically they're all mental fabrications, stories. There's nothing wrong with mental fabrications and stories, you can enjoy those as long as you know that's what they are.

But if you take them to be ultimate reality, then very quickly you begin to suffer. We

continue to live surrounded by these stories. Enjoy them, you can watch the game.

You can even be happy if your team wins and the other team loses, but it doesn't go that deep anymore. So if your team loses, yes, there's a surface dissatisfaction which you observe. Or if your team wins, there's a surface elation, you go, oh, yeah, but it doesn't go that deep.

Because on a deeper level, you know that that has nothing to do with who you are. It's a game, it's a story, a play, a dreamlike formation. Now mostly in a dream, you don't know that you're dreaming.

Occasionally it happens that you have a lucid dream and you suddenly in the middle of a dream realize that you're dreaming and then there's a fundamental shift in the way in which you experience the dream. The same in daily life. Most people are so identified with mental formations, things, events and so on, which all become mental formations, that the lucidity factor is missing.

So they are in the dream of daily existence, but so identified with it, they don't know it is a kind of dream. So they try to derive a satisfying sense of self from it, which is impossible. Now the equivalent of having a lucid dream or realizing in the middle of the dream that you're dreaming is, of course, to become aware in your daily life.

Suddenly there is an awareness, which is not a thought. The awareness, sorry, from the dimension of awareness, you can recognize that the thought is just a thought. And you realize who you are essentially is that deeper presence, the lucidity that enables you not only to have sense perceptions, but also enables you to have thoughts.

That is lucid living. So you have, you can have lucid dreaming, but more important, it's much more important to experience lucid living. And that is the beginning of the end of misidentification with who you are.

And what then happens is that there can still be minor manifestations of happiness and unhappiness. But it doesn't go that deep anymore. Now some people might say, okay, I'm okay with unhappiness not going that deep, but they might feel uneasy with happiness not going that deep anymore.

What I mean, of course, is the what is conventionally called happiness is a temporary surface phenomenon. But there is a deeper happiness, if we even still want to use that term. Usually I don't.

There is a deeper sense of presence of rootedness, of vast spaciousness of aliveness. That is sometimes called joy. But you can call it inner peace.

You can call it a deep sense of contentment in the background. And this is why we're here. To be reminded that that dimension is there within you, waiting to be discovered,

or waiting to reveal itself to you.

Or if you already live in connectedness with that, to deepen it. That's why we're here. So the question then, of course, is, do I know who I am, beyond my physical body, or beyond my external appearance, beyond my place in society, beyond whatever country I happen to belong to, because I happen to be born there, beyond my religion, which, again, in most cases, is my religion, because I happen to be born in a particular place, beyond my social function, status in society, or beyond my possessions.

And all those things I mentioned are really, they may have an external existence, but you experience them as images in your mind. And of course, you are the presence behind those images, and even within those images. So right now, there's a chance for you to stop thinking, not through any kind of effort, not through any willpower, act of will, not through suppression of thinking, but simply because you realize that right now, thinking is not really necessary.

You don't need to figure out what I'm talking about, by thinking about it. You understand the words, so of course, there is some mental activity. But the words are not understood on the level of mental concepts.

They are understood by you at a deeper level, where the truth that these words point to, is immediately recognized as your own presence. So the only presence, when words point towards presence, only the presence in you can recognize the meaning. And you might not be able to explain it to anybody.

It's just the simple fact that you are conscious right now, which is beyond doubt. Everything else may be a kind of dream. But there must be a consciousness for the dream to appear.

It appears in the light of consciousness. I am that I speak for you, and for myself. I am that I am.

I am conscious presence. I am consciousness. Formless.

Timeless. And I know myself as the formless, timeless consciousness. But that knowing can only arise between two thoughts, or in the absence, temporary absence, cessation of thought, like now.

Between this moment, because on the external there is time, and on the deeper there is no time. Between this moment, now, and this moment, now, there is no thought. It's a very amazing thing.

So let's try it again. I say now twice, and in between the two nows, see if you can just be there as the presence. Now.

Now. Well, that wasn't that difficult. Now a little longer.

Now. Now. Now.

You can either close your eyes, or you can look into my eyes. It may be helpful to look into my eyes because I'm not thinking. And that can connect you with the state of not thinking.

And do it again. Now.

[Speaker 2] (23:54 - 23:54)

Now.

[Speaker 1] (24:02 - 43:20)

There's nothing more important in your life, and I'm totally 100% confident and certain that that's the absolute truth. There's nothing more important in your life, no matter who you are, than accessing that dimension, which is not only the dimension of your true identity, but also the place where true intelligence arises, and creativity, and peace, and loving kindness towards all beings, because that is the formless realm of life itself, of consciousness itself, that then recognizes itself in all other forms. So it's vitally important.

And last but not least, you no longer get very unhappy when your team loses. So, another way you can, if you want to practice with inner spaciousness, aware presence, you can also go like this, and for a moment, this, the hands, I'm holding my hands like this, this space between the two hands represents the space between the two hands. This represents the space of presence.

So you go holding the space of presence. This is the external equivalent of something inner. So you can think that past is here, future is here, thinking is here and here, which is past and future, and in between you there's the space.

So you can sometimes do it when you're alone, just go like, just for 10 seconds, 20 seconds, and just be present, no thinking. This is the space of no thought, but alertness. Many moments of no thought during your daily life, and then if you invite them, they will happen more often.

Until, at some point, the sense of presence is never lost even while you're thinking. They're still in the background. A certain sense of beingness or space that is recognized as more important than whatever is happening in your life.

Whatever you need to deal with at that moment, whatever is going on, is something more real. And that also gives you a true perspective on the ups and downs of daily existence. It's almost as if you had a detached view of things.

So that term detachment is something that's associated with the state of presence. It enables you to not to be attached to things, which ultimately means mind stuff, not to be attached. Attached means seeking your identity, your sense of self in those things.

Detached means realizing they are not your self, they are anatta, as it's called in the Buddhist Pali scriptures, not self. They are another Buddhist term, anicca, which means impermanent, they don't last, they come and go. If you don't realize that, if you don't realize who you are, then you suffer.

And then gradually the ability arises to do things and to observe things and to listen to somebody or listen to the sounds of nature or listen to any sound without any interpretation in the mind. Without naming it, without immediately liking or disliking it, without wanting to attract a certain condition to yourself or feel wanting to reject a certain condition. So that's the ability to perceive without naming.

You can look around the room or out of the window and it's an amazing thing if you can be just the presence behind the sense perception. You have gone beyond being merely a person. You have transcended all conditioning, thousands of years of conditioning, including, of course, all your family conditioning, cultural conditioning and so on.

So being the presence, functioning as a person, but being the presence. And when that happens, then the person is a much more pleasant person than the person who is disconnected from the being dimension, doesn't know it. It's always there, but it's not recognized.

That person who is disconnected from presence, who exists only as a person, not as being, that person is a troublemaker. They don't know that. They think they are doing what they need to do.

But they are creating, when I say troublemaker, I, of course, mean unknowingly they create suffering for themselves and others. And they get upset very easily. Any little thing that goes wrong immediately, they get upset.

They are totally at the mercy of conditions, things that happen around them, what people say or do to them or about them, or what people fail to do or should have done. It's all very upsetting, isn't it? And then there comes the righteous indignation and the blaming and the accusing of others or groups of others and the labeling.

And that's all the madness that in a more extreme form becomes violence. Why? They don't know who they are.

They think they are only this person. And they are totally in the grip of the person, which is their conditioning. And the person is, to use an Eastern term, a karmic entity, a conditioned formation.

Often when I observe people, I can feel the heaviness that they carry of their personal sense of self, completely in the grip of their conditioning. And it's a huge burden to walk through life totally in the grip of your conditioning. No spaciousness whatsoever.

Always concerned, thinking about this and that and waiting to react to the next thing and looking out where the next little bit of satisfaction can come from or where the next enemy may appear. Some people who perhaps haven't had prior contact with anything spiritual may reach a point where they get tired of being themselves. It can often be misperceived as being tired of life.

But really, they are tired of who they are. They can somehow sense the repetitiveness of all the stuff that goes on in their lives. And so, that can be a good point to reach.

You are ready to go beyond. And that is not the time when you jump off the Golden Gate Bridge. That's the time you jump out of your conditioned sense of self.

Oh, what a liberation that is. Freedom. Freedom from the person.

Once presence has manifested in your life as the first initial glimpses, you can choose presence more often. That becomes your responsibility. At a deeper level, presence is choosing you, but that's not to go there right now.

It's a helpful perception to feel that you can choose to be present right now. You've chosen to be here with us, with me, and you're choosing to be present at this very moment. So, enjoy the game of life by being lucid within it.

Thank you.